

NORAD, USNORTHCOM Net Over 30 Hoops Title

Press Release

NORAD, USNORTHCOM Net Over 30 Hoops

Title

Wagner's buzzer beater caps perfect 15–0 season

Posted Mar 23, 2004 at 1:34:PM MST

It was what a championship game is supposed to be – hard fought from the tipoff until the final buzzer sounded. Each team had its share of leads, but neither team could pull away from the other. With just 15 seconds remaining, the game was deadlocked at 49.

NORAD/U.S. Northern Command (N/NC) point guard Tony Little surveyed the court as he watched the clock run down to only five seconds remaining. The Air Force Space Command Civil Engineers' (CE) defense clamped down and denied all inside options.

Champions: (Top row, left to right) Robert Price, Kenneth James, Eugene Brown, William Riggie and Anthony Little; (Bottom row, left to right) Roosevelt Boyland, Dan Reifschneider, Michael Smith, John Westerfield and Gary Wagner. Not pictured: Carl Blakey, Ross Brown, Rex Mitchell and Norm Selly.
Photo credit: Tech. Sgt. Devin Fisher

Little drove hard to the basket, and as the CE defense collapsed on him, Little kicked the ball out to Gary Wagner who found himself alone beyond the three–point arc. Wagner, the 6–foot, 7–inch center who had enjoyed success inside the paint, buried a 22–footer as the buzzer sounded giving N/NC a hard–fought 52–49 victory to claim the Peterson AFB Over 30 Basketball championship.

"We were playing for the last shot," said Little. "I was going to run the clock down to five seconds and then drive the ball and look for the open man – their big guy slipped off Gary to (double team me) – and Gary nailed the shot."

"Tony did a great job drawing the defenders to him," said Wagner. "I was all alone and got a great look – and fortunately it went in."

With the game–winning three pointer, Wagner led all N/NC scorers with 11 points. Kenneth James, Dan Reifschneider and William Riggie each chipped in eight points. Shelton Haskins led the way for CE with 13 points. James Robinson added 10 and John Faulkner had eight points.

While Little and Wagner said that was exactly how they drew it up during their final timeout, the N/NC player/coach quickly deflected the accolades.

"He was actually our fourth option," Reifschneider explained. "They shut our first three options down. Tony started to drive to the basket, and then made a great pass to Gary. When Gary shot the ball I thought it was going to be short – but it went in."

The dramatic ending not only garnered N/NC the title, improving on last year's second–place finish, but it put an exclamation point on a perfect 15–0 season.

Reifschneider noted N/NC's depth was the key to its success. During the regular season, N/NC normally rotated its five players every five to 10 minutes depending on

NORAD, USNORTHCOM Net Over 30 Hoops Title

the situation and the competition with ?little or no degradation.? When it came to the playoffs, N/NC substituted one or two players at a time.

?CE was definitely the toughest team we played all season ... they are a great team,? Reifschneider said.

?They were our nemesis all year,? said Haskins, noting N/NC handed CE, 11–4 overall, all four of its losses. ?It was truly a heartbreaker. We did everything we could ? they deserved everything they got.?

Haskins noted that CE had the final shot in the two regular season meetings, but couldn?t convert at the buzzer as N/NC walked away with two point victories in each contest. ?I guess it just wasn?t in the cards.?